



Martin O'Malley, Governor Anthony Brown, Lieutenant Governor
Israel C. Patoka, Executive Director

Governor's Office on Service and Volunteerism
Cassandra Champion, Director

The Governor's Office on Service and Volunteerism (GOSV) is a unit of the Governor's Office of Community Initiatives. Through federal funding, the GOSV annually sponsors [15 AmeriCorps State programs](#) that support AmeriCorps members. These members provide support for disaster services, economic opportunity, education, environmental stewardship, healthy futures, and veterans and military families in Maryland. The GOSV also advocates for effective volunteer program management and recognizes volunteer service across the state on behalf of the Governor of Maryland.

Immediate Release

MEDIA CONTACT:

Tony White
Public Information Officer
410-767-6248 (o)
410-926-8216 (c)

The 30th Annual Governor's Service Awards Honors Volunteers *Marylanders Recognized for Work That Strengthens Communities*

Baltimore, MD – The Governor's Office on Service and Volunteerism (GOSV) formally announced that 27 Maryland residents have been selected to receive Governor's Service Awards. The recipients will be honored November 4, 2013 during a special ceremony and reception at the historic Governor Calvert House in Annapolis, Maryland. GOSV will present the honorees with Governor's Medals during a ceremony beginning at 1:30 p.m.

This year marks the 30th year a Maryland Governor has recognized volunteers from around the state at a special recognition event. The 27 recipients reflect the diversity of Maryland and demonstrate its spirit of service. Over the past year, 1.3 million Marylanders helped tackle some of the major challenges facing the state by donating their time and energy.

"As we continue to navigate through these tough times, the support we get from volunteers and community organizations across our state remains strong," said Governor Martin O'Malley. "These dedicated individuals and groups help to strengthen our cities and towns by responding to our neighbors in need."

The recipients were selected in 11 different categories including individual, organizational, and group volunteers. In addition, special recognition was given to individuals and groups celebrating significant accomplishments. Below is a description of each of the 27 Governor's Service Award recipients in the categories for which they qualified.

ADULT CATEGORY

Ginger Miller

Serves Statewide

Ginger Miller founded John 14:2 Inc., a nonprofit which has helped hundreds of veterans to regain their housing, pride and self-sufficiency. In 2012, Ginger volunteered over 1,500 hours and engaged more than 750 women veterans in program activities.

Susan Piggott

Serves Caroline County

Susan Piggott has served as a Court Appointed Special Advocate since November 2009. As a trained advocate, Susan was matched with two foster care siblings, and advocated for the children through her work with the courts. As a result of her work, the children continue to make wonderful progress and have promising futures ahead of them.

ADULT GROUP CATEGORY

Nanticoke Creekwatchers Citizen Water Monitoring Program

Serves Caroline, Dorchester, and Wicomico Counties

Nanticoke Creekwatchers Citizen Water Monitoring Program is a volunteer-based water monitoring group working to tackle the gaps in water quality data in the Nanticoke and Fishing Bay watersheds. In 2012, 26 Creekwatchers participated in the program, helping to monitor 36 sites and serving a total of 684 hours during the season.

FOR PROFIT CATEGORY

Sofiac

Serves Howard County

Sofiac is a small locally owned technology business that offers free working groups to students, the unemployed, the underemployed, and other Maryland residents. These working groups help to improve participants' skills and provide them with job training. In 2012, Sofiac offered four free working groups, on three separate occasions, for a total of 12 classes and 180 free sessions.

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT

Jeffrey Macris

Serves Anne Arundel County

Jeffrey Macris has served over 2,000 hours to improve Annapolis city schools. In 2005, Jeff founded Concerned Parents for Our Annapolis Schools, and furthered his efforts in 2006 by heading the Annapolis Citizens' Advisory Committee. Jeff now chairs the

Annapolis Education Commission, and recently led a campaign to renovate the city's aging schools – which led to five Annapolis schools receiving over \$70 million.

Gerald Overdorff

Serves Washington County

Gerald Overdorff's commitment to service has been extensive, including his 10 years of service at the Commission on Aging, his service at the Reach Shelter, his service at the Athletic and Recreational Community Center, and his service on a number of committees at his church. Gerald has also served with the Home Ramp Project, where he installed over 100 ramps to enable those with disabilities to stay in their homes.

NATIONAL SERVICE PARTICIPANT

Sarah Kennedy

Serves Baltimore City

Sarah Kennedy served at Alternative Directions as a Notre Dame Mission Volunteers AmeriCorps member. During her term of service, she increased the mentoring program by 41%. Further, Sarah expanded the capacity of the program by recruiting dedicated mentors; in total, the mentors she recruited gave over 1,000 hours of service to their mentees.

Jermichael Mitchell

Serves Wicomico County

Jermichael Mitchell recently served as a full-time member of ShoreCorps/PALS, the AmeriCorps State Program at Salisbury University. As an AmeriCorps member, Jermichael mentored seven students at Bennett Middle School and interacted with many more in an informal way. He made monthly visits to a Juvenile Facility for Girls, seeking to motivate and encourage them to improve their life situations.

Maryam Qayumi

Serves Howard County

Maryam Qayumi served as a Community HealthCorps AmeriCorps member at the Chase Brexton Health Center in Columbia, MD. During her time with Chase Brexton, she enrolled 489 clients in health insurance and/or sliding fee scale programs, provided case management for 724 clients, and worked with 513 children and adults to improve their oral health habits.

NONPROFIT CATEGORY

Casey Cares Foundation

Serves Statewide

Casey Cares Foundation, with the support of their volunteers, provides ongoing, uplifting programs with a special touch to critically ill children and their families. In 2012 alone, Casey Cares and their volunteers provided 6,033 activities for 11,322 participants.

Pro Bono Resource Center of Maryland

Serves Statewide

Pro Bono Resource Center of Maryland (PBRC) recruits attorney volunteers to provide pro bono legal services to at-risk homeowners. In 2012, PBRC conducted 16 workshops utilizing 160 volunteer attorneys. The volunteer attorneys offered more than 876 hours of one-on-one free legal advice to 352 homeowners.

OLDER ADULT CATEGORY

Rick Decker

Serves Baltimore and Harford Counties

Rick Decker has been volunteering with Gunpowder Falls State Park (GFSP) and the Maryland Park Service for over six years. Rick currently serves as the President of the Friends of Maryland State Forest and Parks, Inc, and provides direct service to GFSP by building and maintaining trails, organizing group volunteer activities, and more. In 2012, Rick provided over 3,000 hours of volunteer service at GFSP.

Cathy Polkowski

Serves Baltimore City

Cathy Polkowski is a fulltime volunteer with the Franciscan Center. In 2012, Cathy helped in a variety of ways including distributing 7,005 grocery bags, helping 846 individuals and families restore their gas and electricity, and preventing 296 individuals and families from being evicted. In total, Cathy volunteered over 1,000 hours in 2012.

OLDER ADULT GROUP CATEGORY

The Friends of Cedarville State Forest

Serves Prince George's County

The Friends of Cedarville State Forest is an integral part of Cedarville's operation. The Friends group have instituted forest friendly programs for scouts and youth groups, they have conducted a beginners fishing class at Merkle Wildlife Sanctuary for a local special needs school, they have hosted a Family Autumn Festival event, and much more. In 2012 the Friends contributed over 1,500 hours of invaluable volunteer time.

OUTSTANDING NONPROFIT VOLUNTEER CATEGORY

Debi Katzenberger

Serves Statewide

Debi Katzenberger launched Kami's Jammies program at Casey Cares Foundation, which provides new sleepwear to critically ill children and monthly themed pajama parties to pediatric patients on extended hospital stays. In 2012, Debi planned 26 Kami's Jammies parties, and has volunteered over 550 hours, giving away 4,207 pairs of new pajamas to children.

Gerard R. Vetter, Esq.

Serves Statewide

Gerard R. Vetter, Esq. serves as a board member and volunteer attorney at the Pro Bono Resource Center of Maryland. In 2012, Gerard attended eight workshops and provided brief legal advice to 43 Maryland homeowners. In total, he spent over 46 hours advising homeowners as a part of the Maryland Foreclosure Prevention Pro Bono Project.

SPECIAL AMERICORPS HONOREES**ECHOSTARS**

Serves Allegany County

ECHOSTARS are a group of 60 AmeriCorps members attending Frostburg State University. These outstanding students are part of a living -learning-serving community who serve the local area by mentoring youth, assisting senior citizens, protecting the environment, and more. Together ECHOSTARS AmeriCorps members have served more than 15,000 hours in 2012.

SPECIAL HONOREE**Tufail Ahmad**

Serves Montgomery County

Tufail Ahmad is the co-founder of the Montgomery County Muslim Council and the Montgomery County Muslim Foundation. Under his leadership with the Foundation, Tufail has spearheaded programs that address community needs, including the Annual Food Drive, which has collected 10,000 pounds of food for the Manna Food Center.

Alma H. Cropper

Serves Anne Arundel County

Alma H. Cropper has volunteered with the Wiley H. Bates Legacy Center since 2008. She currently serves as the Chair of the Board of Directors and the Operations Officer. As an active volunteer, Alma spends more than 20 hours each week operating the Center. Her efforts to extend outreach services have helped to increase the average of 20 visitors weekly in 2008 to a current average of 120 visitors weekly.

Naseem Mahdi

Serves Montgomery County

Naseem Mahdi is the National Vice President of Ahmadiyya Muslim Community USA. In 2011, Naseem decided to initiate a nationwide "Muslims for Life" campaign in to commemorate the tenth anniversary of 9/11. In 2012, Mr. Mahdi repeated this campaign and 369 blood drives were registered which collected over 11,000 pints of blood, saving as many as 33,510 lives.

Barbara Reynolds

Serves Statewide

Barbara Reynolds has served the citizens of Maryland for 18 years. Barbara served as Director of the Governor's Office on Service and Volunteerism from July 2009 to

September 2013. Under her leadership, 4,599 AmeriCorps members and 81,633 community volunteers were mobilized to serve Maryland citizens and over 816,000 Marylanders were recognized for their service efforts.

Nancy Winston

Serves Statewide

Nancy Winston has served alongside Shared Hope International's founder Linda Smith beginning in 1999. She began as a board member, and in 2008 began serving as a Senior Director. Nancy has also served on the Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force where she currently chairs the Legislative Committee and is an active member of the Victim Services committee.

Chinese American Senior Services Association

Serves Montgomery County

The Chinese American Senior Services Association's mission is to create a happy and healthy environment for Chinese seniors who have left their native countries to find new life in the United States. In 2012, CASSA volunteers provided a total of 37,742 volunteer hours serving in the Seniors Nutrition Program, providing health education seminars, assisting in English classes, and much more.

TEACHER DEMONSTRATING EXCELLENCE IN SERVICE-LEARNING CATEGORY

Heather Semies

Serves Carroll County

Heather Semies is a teacher at Gateway School and also serves in a variety of roles including the Service Learning Facilitator. In this role, Heather and her students have partnered with Carroll Springs School in a number of environmental projects. Thanks to Heather, Gateway students understand and experience high quality service-learning and it has made a difference to the school culture and the community.

Margaret Van Buskirk

Serves Montgomery County

Margaret Van Buskirk has been the advisor for the extracurricular student service learning environmental club at Gaithersburg High School for the past two years. During the 2012-2013 school year, 135 students participated in club meetings and service learning activities that focused on environmental areas of erosion, watershed protection, storm water runoff, recycling, invasive plant removal, and many other topics.

YOUTH CATEGORY

Athena Kan

Serves Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Howard County

Athena Kan is a young woman with a passion for community service. Athena has co-founded a nonprofit, is a member of the HC DrugFree's Teen Advisory Council, serves

as the student representative for Howard County Commission for Women, and serves as a member of the steering committee for the Howard County Anti-Bullying Initiative.

Lorelei McIntyre-Brewer

Serves Statewide

Lorelei McIntyre-Brewer serves pediatric heart and lung patients by making compression heart pillows for Heart Hugs. Through her service with Heart Hugs, she has also inspired others to help in the construction of pillows and together they have given 1,600 children pillows in 13 countries and 21 states.

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